

What is claimed is:

1. A vehicular steering operation device comprising:

a hub portion mounted to a steering shaft;

5 a rim portion fixed to an outer periphery of the hub portion; and

a vehicle speed control member operatively disposed on a surface of at least one of vehicle front sides of the hub portion and the rim portion.

2. The vehicular steering operation device according to claim 1, wherein the surface,
10 closer to the vehicle front side, of the rim portion has a concave portion to accommodate the vehicle control member.

3. The vehicular steering operation device according to claim 2, wherein the vehicle speed control member includes an accelerating operation member disposed for a
15 sliding capability in a fore and aft direction of a vehicle to allow the accelerating operation member to slide in the aft direction of the vehicle, thereby controlling a traveling speed of the vehicle.

4. The vehicular steering operation device according to claim 3, further comprising:
20 an upper end support portion formed on the surface, closer to the vehicle front side, of the rim portion; and

a lower end support portion formed on the surface, closer to the vehicle front side, of the rim portion in an area spaced from the upper end support portion;
wherein the accelerating operation member is disposed between the upper and
25 lower end support portions for a sliding capability in a radial direction of the rim portion.

5. The vehicular steering operation device according to claim 1, wherein the vehicle speed control member includes an acceleration lever having an end portion pivotally supported to allow the acceleration lever to be pulled rearward in a vehicle, thereby controlling a traveling speed of the vehicle.
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6. The vehicular steering operation device according to claim 5, wherein the acceleration lever is disposed along an axis of the rim portion and has a substantially V-shaped configuration bent toward the vehicle front side.
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7. The vehicular steering operation device according to claim 2, wherein the vehicle speed control member includes an acceleration lever having an end portion pivotally supported to allow the acceleration lever to be pulled rearward in a vehicle, thereby controlling a traveling speed of the vehicle.
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8. The vehicular steering operation device according to claim 7, wherein the acceleration lever is disposed along an axis of the rim portion and is of a gun-grip type.
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9. The vehicular steering operation device according to claim 1, wherein an operation switch is disposed on at least one of the hub portion and the rim portion at an area thereof to which, under a condition where the rim portion is gripped, a thumb can reach.
10. The vehicular steering operation device according to claim 9, wherein the operation switch includes at least a winker switch.

11. A method of controlling a vehicle speed using a vehicular steering operation device, the method comprising the steps of:

detecting accelerator displacement values of a pair of vehicle speed control members located left and right of a steering operation device, respectively;

5 selecting one, whose accelerator displacement value resulting for a given time interval has a less variation than that of the other, from the pair of vehicle speed control members; and

10 adjusting a throttle opening in dependence upon an accelerator output value of the selected vehicle speed control member for controlling a traveling speed.

12. A method of controlling a vehicle speed using a vehicular steering operation device, the method comprising the steps of:

detecting operational displacement values of a pair of vehicle speed control members located left and right of a steering operation device, respectively;

15 selecting one, which is previously selected, from the pair of vehicle speed control members; and

adjusting a throttle opening in dependence upon an accelerator output value of the selected vehicle speed control member for controlling a traveling speed.

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13. A method of controlling a speed of a vehicle using a vehicular steering operation device by increasing a throttle opening through accelerating operation to increase a vehicle speed and braking a vehicle traveling through braking operation to decrease the vehicle speed, the method comprising:

25 when performing both the accelerating operation and the braking operation, closing the throttle valve and applying a brake to a traveling vehicle, thereby decreasing the

vehicle speed.

14. A method of controlling a vehicle speed using a vehicular steering operation device, the method comprising the steps of:

5 measuring a variant amount in an accelerator displacement value appearing for a given time interval; and

adjusting a throttle opening, when the variant amount reaches a given value, in dependence upon another variant amount which is less than the current variant amount of the accelerator displacement value.

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15. The method of controlling the vehicle speed using the vehicular steering operation device according to claim 14, wherein when the variant amount exceeds the given value and the accelerator displacement value increases, the throttle opening is kept at a constant value.

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